CAPSULE SUMMARY
BA-3069
Catonsville Post Office
1001 Frederick Road
Catonsville, Baltimore County
ca. 1935
Public

The circa 1935 Catonsville Post Office represents a high-style interpretation of the Colonial Revival style in public buildings constructed by the Public Works Administration during the New Deal. The construction of the post office occurred during Catonsville's period of expansion from a small village to a Baltimore City suburb during the first half of the 20th century. The Catonsville Post Office, located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Frederick Road and Sanford and Melvin Avenues is in the heart of the growing suburban town. The setting of the post office has changed over the last fifty years as the Frederick Road corridor, especially the area around the intersection at which the post office is located, has expanded to become a main transportation route to and from the city of Baltimore.

The one-story, Flemish bond brick masonry building rests on a foundation of roughly cut and coursed stone veneer over poured concrete. The hipped roof, clad in slate tiles, rises steeply from the eaves then levels off at the top to a flat or shallow-hipped roof. One central interior Flemish bond brick chimney rises through the roof near the west elevation and terminates in a stone chimney cap. The original main block of the building is five bays wide and three bays deep. A projecting entry portal with a hipped roof and cupola dominates the façade. Two alterations to the building include a one-story, three-bay deep, five-bay wide Flemish bond brick masonry addition to the south elevation and a one-story, one-bay wide, six-bay deep loading dock addition to the west elevation. Bordering the south and west sides of the property is a chain-link fence that encloses an asphalt parking lot. The post office fronts north on the southwest corner of the intersection of Frederick Road and Sanford and Melvin Avenues.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-3069

1. Name of Property   (indicate preferred name)

historic	Catonsville Post Office
other	

2. Location

street and number	1001 Frederick Road	__	not for publication
city, town	Catonsville	_-	vicinity
county	Baltimore County		

3. Owner of Property   (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name	United States Postal Service				
street and number	1001 Frederick Road			telephone	410.747.4510
city, town	Catonsville	state	MD	zip code	21228

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Baltimore County Courthouse	tax map and parcel	map 101, parcel 260
city, town	Towson	liber	folio

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

_____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
_____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
_____ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
_____ Other:_____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
___ _district	_X_ public	___ _agriculture	_____ landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
_X_ building(s)	_____ private	___ _commerce/trade	_____ recreation/culture	__1___	___ ___ buildings
___ _structure	_____ both	___ _defense	_____ religion	___ ___	___ ___ sites
___ _site		_____ domestic	_____ social	_____	_____ structures
___ _object		___ education	___ transportation	_____	_____ objects
		_____ funerary	___ _work in progress	__1___	___ ___ Total
		_X_ government	___ _unknown		
		___ _health care	___ _vacant/not in use		
		___ _industry	___ _other:		

**Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory**
___0___

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-3069

Condition

___ excellent	___ deteriorated
X good	___ ruins
___ fair	___ altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed circa 1935, the Catonsville Post Office represents a high-style example of Colonial Revival style architecture in small government buildings. The one-story, Flemish bond brick masonry building rests on a foundation of roughly cut and coursed stone veneer over poured concrete. The hipped roof, clad in slate tiles, rises steeply from the eaves then levels off at the top to a flat or shallow-hipped roof. One central interior Flemish bond brick chimney rises through the roof near the west elevation and terminates in a stone chimney cap. The original main block of the building is five bays wide and three bays deep. A projecting entry portal with a hipped roof and cupola dominates the façade. Two alterations to the building include a one-story, three-bay deep, five-bay wide Flemish bond brick masonry addition to the south elevation and a one-story, one-bay wide, six-bay deep loading dock addition to the west elevation. Bordering the south and west sides of the property is a chain-link fence that encloses an asphalt parking lot. The post office fronts north on the southwest corner of the intersection of Frederick Road and Sanford and Melvin Avenues.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The façade, or north elevation, is six bays wide. The projecting entry is central to the five east bays and is pierced by one six-light double-leaf metal door with a blind one-light transom and brick jack arch. The decorative wood door surround features reeded half-columns with a motif of spiraling ribbon. A terra cotta eagle surmounts the door. The entry is flanked by two 12/12 windows to the east and three 12/12 windows to the west. All window openings on the façade have molded wood surrounds, stone sills, and brick jack arches. A wood cupola, pierced on four sides with an octagonal metal-clad roof, surmounts the hipped roof of the projecting entry.

Dominating the west elevation is a loading dock with a poured concrete deck. The wall surface of this elevation is recessed by one bay. Piercing this wall are one lighted-and-flush double-leaf metal door and one lighted-and-flush single-leaf metal door. Both doors have metal surrounds. One 6/6 window with a molded wood surround and brick jack arch pierces this elevation.

Six twelve-light fixed windows with molded wood surrounds, stone sills and brick jack arches pierce the six-bay wide south elevation. For the placement of air conditioning units, each of these sashes has been retrofitted by the removal of four panes of glass. Near the west end of the elevation there is one rectangular louvered vent with a stone sill. The west bay of the elevation is pierced by one door opening with a brick jack arch and metal surround.

Six window openings with 12/12 sash, stone sills, brick jack arches and wood surrounds pierce the east elevation at regular intervals.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
__ 1600-1699	__ agriculture	__ economics	__ health/medicine	__ performing arts
__ 1700-1799	__ archeology	__ education	__ industry	__ philosophy
__ 1800-1899	X architecture	__ engineering	__ invention	X politics/government
X 1900-1999	__ art	__ entertainment/	__ landscape architecture	__ religion
__ 2000-	__ commerce	recreation	__ law	__ science
	__ communications	__ ethnic heritage	__ literature	__ social history
	__ community planning	__ exploration/	__ maritime history	__ transportation
	__ conservation	settlement	__ military	__ other:

Specific dates	1935 ca	**Architect/Builder**	Unknown
Construction dates	1935 ca		

Evaluation for:

_____ National Register _____ Maryland Register ___X___ not evaluated

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Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The circa 1935 Catonsville Post Office represents a high-style interpretation of the Colonial Revival style in public buildings constructed by the Public Works Administration during the New Deal. The construction of the post office occurred during Catonsville's period of expansion from a small village to a Baltimore City suburb during the first half of the 20th century. The Catonsville Post Office, located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Frederick Road and Sanford and Melvin Avenues is in the heart of the growing suburban town. The setting of the post office has changed over the last fifty years as the Frederick Road corridor, especially the area around the intersection at which the post office is located, has expanded to become a main transportation route to and from the city of Baltimore.

HISTORY

Catonsville's development began earlier than that of most communities in Baltimore county. In 1810, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, received a large tract of land on the north and south sides of the Frederick Turnpike.[1] Carroll conveyed the property to his son-in-law, Richard Caton, to develop the property. Due to Caton's financial difficulties at that time, Carroll retained legal title to the property until 1822. Under Carroll's direction, Caton divided the land into twenty smaller lots fronting Frederick Road, comprising the original village of Catonsville.[2] Carroll eventually transferred the land to Caton in 1822.[3]

Over the course of the next century, Catonsville developed from a small village on the outskirts of Baltimore to a thriving streetcar suburb. By 1880, the population of Catonsville reached 1,700 inhabitants. Within the next

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[1] Chartered in 1805, the Frederick Turnpike was also called Frederick Avenue during the late-19th century, and by 1930 was known as Frederick Road.

[2] Edward Orser and Joseph Arnold, *Catonsville 1880 to 1940 from Village to Suburb* (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, Publishers, 1989), p. 15.

[3] Neal A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County* (Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979), pp. 298-299.

Name   Catonsville Post Office, 1001 Frederick Road, Catonsville, Baltimore County
Continuation Sheet

Number _8_ Page _2_

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twenty years, the community had established the services of four churches, six fraternal and benevolent organizations, a library, a monthly newspaper, a national bank, and a post office.[4]

During the late 1800s, the post office in Catonsville was housed in the front portion of Library Hall, which was located on the south side of Frederick Road, near Mellor Avenue. Situated between the Short Line Railroad depot and the Wilson and Poehlman Lumber and Coal building, Library Hall was a one-and-a-half story Queen Anne-style building which had been built in 1887. Although various tenants, including the post office and then the First National Bank occupied the space in front, the rest of the building was used for public meetings, social events, theatrical productions, and as a library.

The prosperity of the 1920s and the growth of suburbs around Baltimore City brought a surge of new construction and tremendous influx of new residents to Catonsville. The population jumped from nearly 5,000 in 1920 to over 9,000 in 1930, with almost 900 new dwellings built in the village core and in surrounding subdivisions. The economic effects of the Great Depression, combined with Catonsville's growing population, resulted in the construction of a new Post Office at the intersection of Frederick Road and Sanford Avenue. Through this construction effort, the town would benefit from the modern conveniences of a new post office after providing federally funded jobs for the area's unemployed residents.

The Colonial Revival style in which the Catonsville Post Office was executed was the most prevalent style in which local government buildings and local branches of federal and state government buildings were constructed during the 1930s. During this decade, preservation efforts in Colonial Williamsburg and Greenfield Village, in Dearborn, Michigan, brought to light new information about the Colonial period of America's history. A new surge in interest in Colonial history, and more specifically, in Colonial architecture, resulted in an increasing amount of Colonial Revival style architecture to be constructed throughout the eastern United States. This style exalted America's democratic and nationalistic past while providing a highly decorative face for the nation's public buildings. The Catonsville Post Office models the finer aspects of this style. The Flemish bond walls, 12/12 windows, classical symmetry, projecting entry and tall cupola all mirror decorative aspects of similar public buildings throughout the United States. Alterations to the post office since its construction in the 1930s have remained sympathetic to its original design. The addition that nearly doubled the building's original square footage retains the same bond pattern on the exterior walls, the same foundation treatment, and the same fenestration pattern.

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[4] J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Baltimore City and County from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Including Biographical Sketches of their Representative Men* (Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881; reprint edition Salem, MA: Higginson Book Company, nd), p. 821.

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Inventory No.BA-3069

Name   Catonsville Post Office, 1001 Frederick Road, Catonsville, Baltimore County
Continuation Sheet

Number 8   Page 3

Although the intersection of Frederick Road and Melvin and Sanford Avenues has continued to develop over the last fifty years, the Catonsville Post Office retains its historic character and overall feeling while still serving as a local branch of the United States Postal Service.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Orser, Edward and Joseph Arnold. *Catonsville 1880-1940 from Village to Suburb.* Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, Publishers, 1989.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881; reprinted edition Salem, MA: Higginson Book Company, nd.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property   Less than one Acre
Acreage of historical setting   Less than one Acre
Quadrangle name   Baltimore West   Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Since circa 1935, the Catonsville Post Office has been associated with parcel 260 as noted on grid 7 of map 101 located in the Baltimore County Tax Assessor's office.
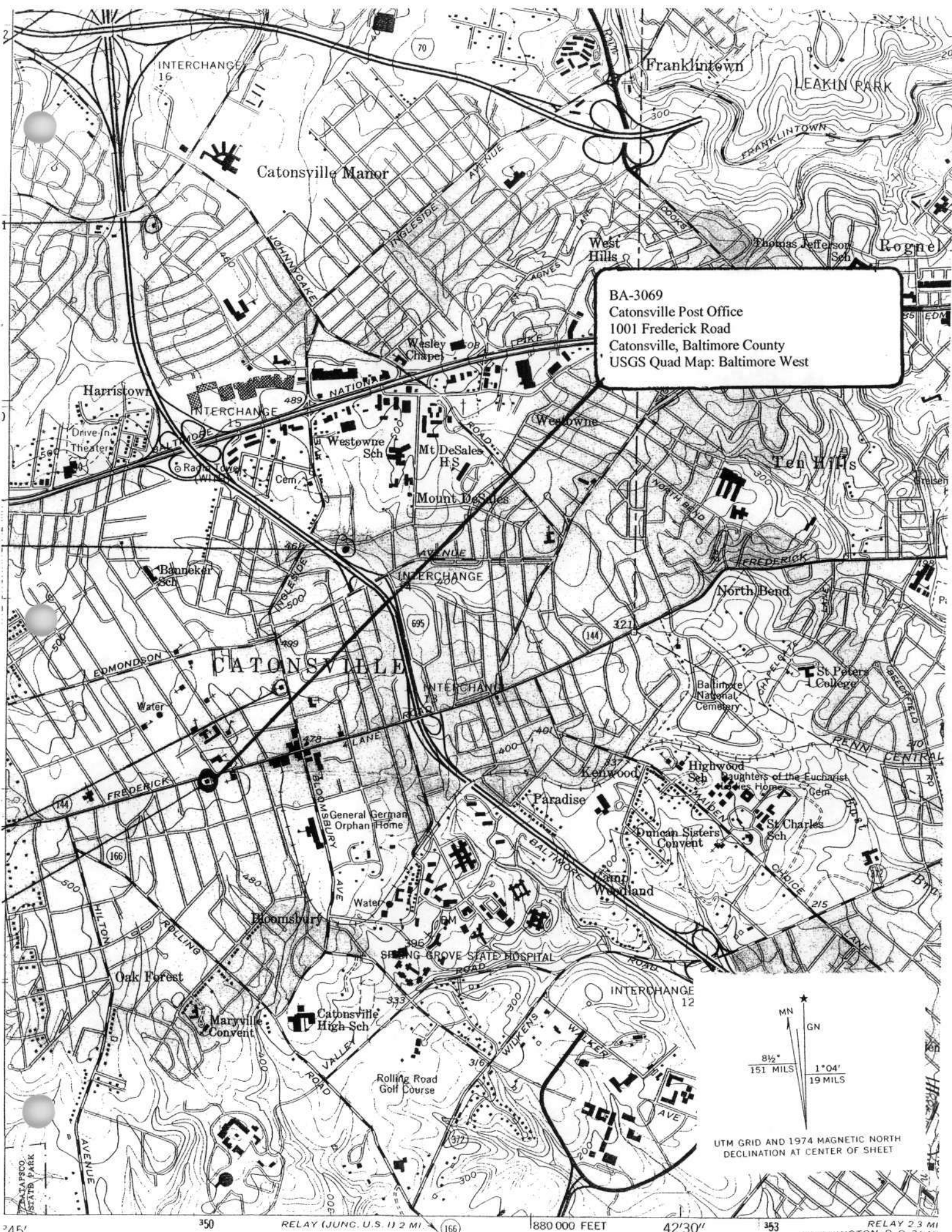
11. Form Prepared by

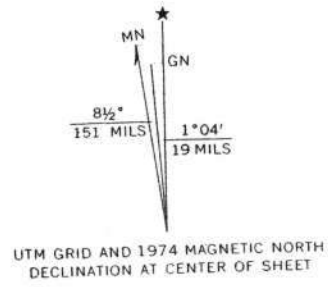|			
name/title	A. L. McDonald and L. V. Trieschmann, Architectural Historians		
organization	E.H.T. Traceries, Inc.	date	10 November 2000
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

BA-3069
Catonsville Post Office
1001 Frederick Road
Catonsville, Baltimore County
USGS Quad Map: Baltimore West

BA-3064

CATONSVILLE POST OFFICE
1001 FREDERICK ROAD, CATONSVILLE
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

TRACERIES
10/2000

MD SHPO

NORTH ELEVATION, CAMERA FACING
SOUTHWEST

1/4

BA-3069
CATONSVILLE POST OFFICE
1001 FREDERICK ROAD, CATONSVILLE
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

TRACERIES
10/2000

MD SHPO

NORTHWEST CORNER, CAMERA FACING
SOUTHEAST

2/4

BA-3069

CATONSVILLE POST OFFICE
1001 FREDERICK ROAD, CATONSVILLE
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

TRACERIES
10/2000

MD SHPO

SOUTHEAST CORNER, CAMERA FACING
NORTHWEST

3/4

BA-3069

CATONSVILLE POST OFFICE
1001 FREDERICK ROAD, CATONSVILLE
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

TRACERIES
10/2000

MD SHPO

NORTHEAST CORNER, CAMERA FACING
SOUTHWEST

4/4